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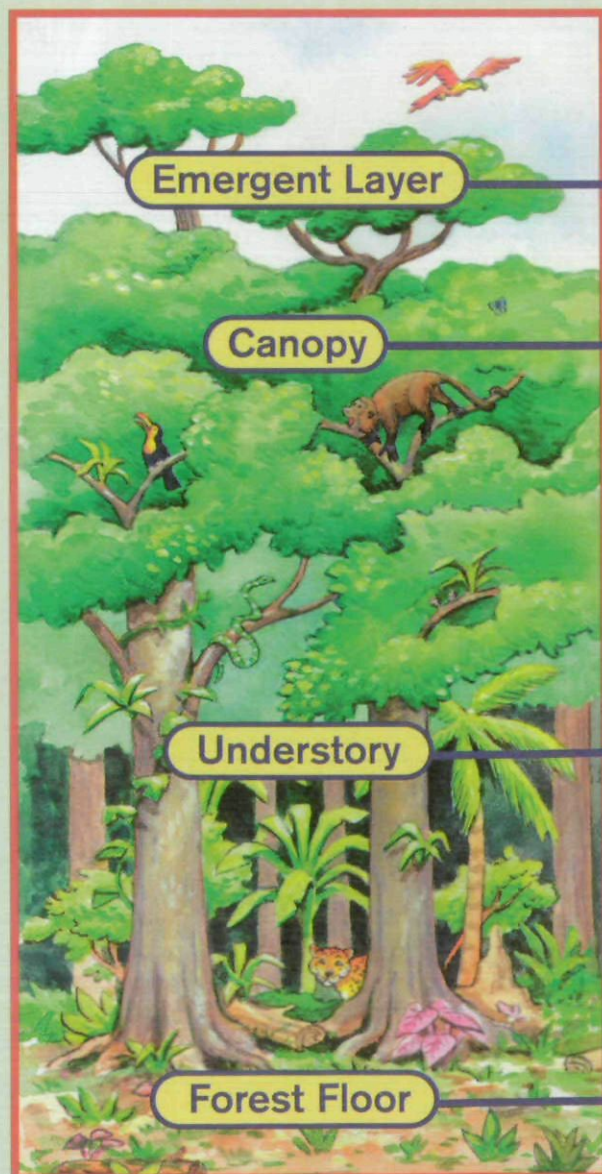
# Life in a Tropical Rain Forest

What can you find in this amazing place?

Welcome to a **tropical rain forest**! It is a warm, rainy place with many tall trees. More than half of the world's **species**, or types, of plants and animals are found here.

## Layers of Life

A tropical rain forest has four layers. From top to bottom, the forest is full of life.



Birds, bats, and butterflies live in the tops of the tallest trees. That is called the **emergent layer**.

In the tops of the shorter trees, or **canopy**, you can find animals such as toucans and monkeys.

Snakes, red-eyed tree frogs, and other animals live in the **understory**, or lower branches.

Animals such as jaguars can be found on the dark **forest floor**.



People walk on a bridge through a tropical rain forest canopy.

lan Cumming/Getty Images

## Trees Clean the Air

You can thank tropical rain forests for keeping the air clean. Trees help to recycle Earth's air. The leaves take in a gas called **carbon dioxide**. Too much carbon dioxide in the air is harmful to people. The leaves then give off a gas called **oxygen**. People need oxygen to stay alive.

## Foods and Medicine

What do lemons, chocolate, and cashew nuts have in common? They are foods that first came from tropical rain forests. Hundreds of foods grow there today.

Many medicines are made from rain forest plants. Today, scientists are studying the plants to find new medicines to cure diseases.



Lemon trees grow in tropical rain forests.

Marion Brenner/Jupiter Images

## Saving the Rain Forests

Tropical rain forests are in danger. For years, people have been cutting down trees to make room for farms and roads. Many plants and animals are in danger of becoming **extinct**, or completely gone.

"When rain forests are cut down, animals lose their homes," says Kerry Zobor. She works at the World Wildlife Fund. "More carbon dioxide fills the air. Scientists think that makes Earth get warmer. If it gets too hot, it could cause many animals to go extinct."

The World Wildlife Fund is a group working to protect animals and **habitats**. A habitat is a place in nature where an animal or a plant lives. "We are working every day to help save rain forests around the world," says Zobor.



The red-eyed tree frog lives in the rain forest.



A large area of this rain forest has been destroyed.

Brent Stirton/Getty Images; frog: Tim Flach/Getty Images

**THINK ABOUT IT!** Why is it important to save tropical rain forests?



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